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TELEGRAMPAGE 01 BUENOS 03346 01 OF 02 272128Z
ACTION ARA-15

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BUENOS 03346 01 OF 02 272128Z

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 10-15 ADS-00 CIAE-00 EB-00 INR-10
LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 COM-04 LABE-00 INRE-00
SSO-00 DODE-00 PA-02 SP-02 HA-05 DOTE-00 FAA-00
SS-15 NSCE-00 ICAC-00 /094 W

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O R 272019Z APR 79
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0420
INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 3348

DEPT. FOR ARA LABOR ADVISOR; ALSO PASS AMBASSADOR
CASTRO, AIFLD AND AFL-CIO

E.O. 12065: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, AR

SUBJECT: GENERAL STRIKE PARTIALLY EFFECTIVE; FURTHER TRADE
UNION ARRESTS AND RELEASES ANNOUNCED

REF: A) 8A-3313; B) STATE 105043

1. SUMMARY: TODAY'S STRIKE IS PARTIALLY EFFECTIVE IN THE BUENOS AIRES FACTORY DISTRICTS AND TRANSPORTATION SECTOR, WITH ONLY SCATTERED REPORTS OF MINOR STRIKE TROUBLE IN OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY. THE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED THAT NINE MORE TRADE UNION LEADERS WERE RELEASED LATE APR 26, INCLUDING THREE MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF S, ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT HAVE CONFIRMATION. HOWEVER, NEW ARRESTS HAVE BEEN ANNOUNCED. SOME PAPERS TOTAL THE NO. OF LEADERS RELEASED AT S, WITH AROUND 10 OF THOSE ORIGINALLY DETAINED REPORTEDLY STILL UNDER ARREST, BUT ACCOUNTS VARY IN THE MEDIA AND REQUIRE FURTHER INVESTIGATION. STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT FOR THE JAILED ARGENTINE LABOR LEADERS FROM INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS CONTINUE TO BE RECEIVED BY THE GOA, BUT THE AFL-CIO CABLE HAS NOT BEEN PUBLICIZED. END SUMMARY.

2. AS OF 1100 AM APRIL 27, THE 24-HOURS NATIONAL STRIKE CALLED BY "THE COMMITTEE OF 25" APPEARS TO BE PARTIALLY EFFECTIVE IN BUENOS AIRES. AT LEAST 2 OF THE 5 INTERURBAN COMMUTER RAILWAY LINES IN THE BUENOS AIRES AREA WERE NOT FUNCTIONING EARLY THIS MORNING, ALTHOUGH ACCORDING TO A LATE REPORT ONE OF THESE LINES IS NOW BEGINNING TO NORMALIZE. IN THE INDUSTRIAL BELT AROUND THE CITY OF BUENOS AIRES MOST AUTO PLANTS ARE VIRTUALLY SHUT DOWN -- MERCEDES BENZ, PEUGEOT, CITROEN AND CHRYSLER; FIAT REPORTS 80 PERCENT ABSENTEEISM, BUT FORD IS WORKING NORMALLY. SEVERAL METAL AND FIRE FACTORIES ARE NOT WORKING OR HAVE ONLY PARTIAL ATTENDANCE AND WE ASSUME THIS IS TRUE FOR OTHER INDUSTRIAS AS WELL. ACCORDING TO AN AUTO INDUSTRY SOURCE, THE CORDOBA AUTO PLANTS ARE WORKING NORMALLY OR NEAR NORMALLY. THERE WERE EARLIER REPORTS OF SLOWDOWNS IN THE BUENOS AIRES SUBWAYS

BUT PRESS SOURCES TELL US THAT THEY ARE NOW RETURNING TO NORMAL OPERATION. AIRLINE TRAFFIC APPEARS TO BE NORMAL. BUS, TAXI AND PASSENGER VEHICLE TRAFFIC WAS NORMAL AND THE OFFICE AND BUSINESS DISTRICTS IN THE CENTER OF BUENOS AIRES ARE OPERATING NORMALLY, INCLUDING THE STOCK EXCHANGE WHERE THERE ARE NO SIGNS OF PANIC. WE HAVE NO CONFIRMED REPORTS OF STRIKE ADHESION IN OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, BUT THERE MAY BE SOME WORKER NON-ATTENDANCE IN THE CORDOBA INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT AND SLOWDOWNS IN THE RAILWAY LINES IN MENDOZA.

3. AN INFORMED INDUSTRY SOURCE REPORTED THAT THE STRIKE IS MORE EFFECTIVE THAN INDUSTRIAL LEADERS HAD ANTICIPATED.

4. THE INTERIOR MINISTRY ISSUED A COMUNIQUE APRIL 26 DECLARING THE NATIONAL STRIKE TO BE ILLEGAL AND PRIMISING TO GUARANTEE PUBLIC ORDER AND THE RIGHT TO WORK "WITH ALL MEANS AT HAND AND WITH THE STRENGTH GIVEN BY REASON AND LAW." THE MINISTRY ALSO STATED THAT "A SMALL GROUP OF PERSONS HAVE INSTIGATED THE WORKERS TO HOLD AN ILLEGAL STRIKE ON FRIDAY, 27 APRIL, AND HAVE THUS PROMPTED THE GOVERNMENT'S (ARREST) ACTION IN KEEPING WITH ITS RESPONSIBILITY TO PROMOTE THE COMMON GOOD AND TO ENFORCE THE LAW. THIS MINORITY GROUP CHOSE AN ILLEGAL WAY TO DISRUPT THE MARCH OF THE PROCESS OF NATIONAL REORGANIZATION WHICH HAS BEEN SEEKING, WITH UNDERSTANDABLE DIFFICULTIES, TO PULL THE COUNTRY OUT OF THE SITUATION IT IS NOW EXPERIENCING. THEY HAVE ATTEMPTED TO HAVE THE WORKERS ADOPT ILLEGAL, USELESS ATTITUDES. UNFORTUNATELY, THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME THESE ACTIONS HAVE HAPPENED IN THIS COUNTRY AND THE PEOPLE ARE CERTAINLY AWARE OF THIS. THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BRANCH, WITH PRUDENCE, OBJECTIVITY AND A DECISIVENESS WHICH DOES NOT AND WILL NOT INDULGE IN HESITATION, HAS PROCEEDED TO ENFORCE THE LAW."

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(X) Release () Excise () Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: () In Part () In Full

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Date Declassify on Reason

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TELEGRAM

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PRESIDENT VIDELA AND LOCAL TRADE UNION LEADERS
ARE UNAWARE OF ITS EXISTENCE.
CHAPLIN

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UNCLAS SECTION 2 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 3348

5. THE MINISTRY'S COMUNIQUE INDICATED THAT THE INTERROGATION OF THE DETAINED TRADE UNION LEADERS RESULTED IN THE CONCLUSION THAT THE FOLLOWING WERE NOT INVOLVED IN THE STRIKE CALL AND THAT THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH, THEREFORE, HAD ORDERED THEIR RELEASE: ALBERTO CAMPOS (METAL WORKERS); FERNANDO DONAIRES (PAPER WORKERS LEADER AND A MEMBER OF THE "25'S" EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF 5); BENJAMIN GAETANI (VEGETABLE OIL WORKERS); JORGE LUJAN (GLASS WORKERS); RODOLFO SOBERANO (MILLERS); CARLOS CABRERA (MINE WORKER AND MEMBER OF THE 25'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF 5); DELMIDIO MORET (LIGHT AND POWER WORKERS); SANTIAGO SERPA (SANITATION WORKERS LEADER), AND RAMON VALLE (INSURANCE WORKER LEADER AND MEMBER OF THE 25'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF 5).

6. WE DO NOT YET HAVE CONFIRMATION THAT THESE LEADERS HAVE INDEED BEEN RELEASED AND WE ARE SEEKING TO CONFIRM PRESS REPORTS THAT GLASS EMPLOYEE LEADER ALFONSO MILLAN WAS RELEASED LAST NIGHT. THE PRESS REPORTS THAT THERE ARE STILL 10 NATIONAL LEADERS UNDER ARREST, BUT ACCOUNTS DIFFER IN THE MEDIA AS TO THE TOTAL NO. BOAT MECHANIC LEADER JOSE LUIS CASTILLO REPORTEDLY RESPONDED TO THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS ARREST ORDER BY TURNING HIMSELF IN TO AUTHORITIES. THE PRESS ALSO REPORTED THAT AT LEAST 5 LOCAL TRADE UNION LEADERS IN CORDOBA HAVE BEEN ARRESTED, AS FOLLOWS: COMMERCIAL WORKER LEADER MANIR FATALA; TELEGRAPH WORKER LEADER MANUEL RODRIGUEZ; RESTAURANT EMPLOYEE LEADER JUAN REYES; STATE PETROLEUM WORKER LEADER JUAN DE BIASIS; AND METAL WORKER LEADER JULIO CESAR ROMERO.

7. THE PRESS ALSO REPORTED THAT PROTESTS AGAINST THE ARRESTS AND DEMANDS FOR THE RELEASE OF THE UNIONISTS CONTINUED TO CONVERGE ON THE GOVERNMENT IN THE FORM OF TELEGRAMS AND STATEMENTS FROM NATIONAL AND FOREIGN POLITICAL AND PROFESSIONAL GROUPS. THE STATE DEPT. STATEMENT WAS REPORTED, AS WELL AS THE FACT THAT THE UNITED AUTO WORKERS (UAW) HAD CABLED PRESIDENT VIDELA DEMANDING THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF THE ARGENTINE TRADE UNIONISTS. AN INTERNATIONAL METAL WORKERS FEDERATION (IMF) STATEMENT WAS ALSO REPORTED. THERE HAS BEEN NO MENTION IN THE LOCAL PRESS OF THE AFL-CIO CABLE TO

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